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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 9 February 1996, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. GERVAIS (Côte d'Ivoire)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.50 a.m.

AD HOC OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON THE NEED TO HARMONIZE AND IMPROVE UNITED NATIONS INFORMATION SYSTEMS FOR OPTIMAL UTILIZATION AND ACCESSIBILITY BY ALL STATES

The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should invite Mr. Kamal (Pakistan) to continue the informal consultations on the need to harmonize and improve United Nations information services for optimal utilization and accessibility by all States, pursuant to Council resolution 1995/61, and to report thereon at a later date.

It was so decided.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS (E/1996/2, E/1996/6, E/1996/12; E/1996/L.1 and Add.1) (continued)

BASIC PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE COUNCIL (E/1996/1 and Add.1, E/1996/13, E/1996/14; E/1996/L.1 and Add.1)

The PRESIDENT invited the Council to consider the draft proposals contained in documents E/1996/L.1 and Add.1.

Draft decision I: High-level segment of the Economic and Social Council of 1996

Draft decision I was adopted.

Mrs. MORGAN SOTOMAYOR (Observer for Mexico) said that her delegation welcomed the Council's decision to devote the high-level segment for 1996 to international cooperation against the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotics and psychotropic substances and related activities.

Draft decision II: Provisional agenda for the substantive session of 1996 of the Economic and Social Council

Mr. BUSACCA (Observer for Italy), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union was pleased that the coordination segment of the 1996 substantive session would consider the theme, "Coordination of the United Nations system activities for poverty eradication", a subject which encompassed virtually all of the development activities in the United Nations system. The report of the Secretary-General in his capacity as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination would provide a system-wide assessment

of the status of coordination in the field of poverty eradication. The report should be problem-oriented and should clearly identify issues where coordination of United Nations activities needed to be reinforced. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) should make a major contribution to the debate, given that it played a central role in coordination, and the European Union hoped that all United Nations funds and programmes would likewise make substantial contributions. Owing to the cross-sectoral nature of poverty eradication, the Council should deal with the topic in an integrated and action-oriented manner in order to provide clear and specific recommendations to the various elements of the United Nations system.

The European Union was committed to the principle that the Council's coordination segment should deal with two themes, one of them of a sectoral character, and suggested that the Council should devote its 1996 coordination segment to the issue of fresh water, which was of growing importance to many countries. While the European Union shared the Secretary-General's views regarding the importance of the status of women, it felt that the Council would not be able to deal with a second cross-sectoral theme such as gender equality, equity and the empowerment of women at its 1996 session. Moreover, the second aspect of the discussion on the theme "Coordination of the United Nations system activities for the eradication of poverty" would focus specifically on the gender perspective. To avoid duplication the Fourth World Conference on Women and the follow-up to that Conference would be addressed under the relevant agenda item during the Council's general segment.

The PRESIDENT informed the Council that, as a result of informal consultations, there had been consensus on the inclusion of a sub-item entitled "Follow-up to General Assembly resolution 50/106: Business and development" in the provisional agenda of the substantive session.

Mrs. CASTRO de BARISH (Costa Rica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, welcomed draft decision II, and the inclusion of the new sub-item.

Draft decision II was adopted.

Draft decision III: Basic programme of work of the Economic and Social Council for 1997

Draft decision III was adopted.

Draft decision IV: Consideration of reports of intergovernmental bodies

Draft decision IV was adopted.

Draft decision V: World Decade for Cultural Development

Draft decision V was adopted.

Draft decision VI: Dates of the third session of the Committee on Natural Resources

Draft decision VI was adopted.

Draft decision VII: Participation of non-governmental organizations at the 1996 sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Social Development

Draft decision VII was adopted.

Draft decision VIII: Dates of the 1996 session of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations

Draft decision VIII was adopted.

Draft decision IX: New and innovative ideas for generating funds

Mrs. CASTRO de BARISH (Costa Rica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group supported the inclusion of an item entitled "New and innovative ideas for generating funds" in the provisional agenda of the 1996 substantive session of the Council. However, it was the Group's understanding that the proposal would not involve any financing mechanism which would replace Member States' contributions to the budget or official development assistance (ODA); that any additional resources would be used for the operational activities of United Nations agencies involved in development and humanitarian assistance rather than for peace-keeping activities; and that consideration would be given only to international sources of and mechanisms for financing not to the generation of resources at the national level. Moreover, as the additional funding for the implementation of programmes stemming from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had not yet materialized, the Group hoped that the Council could also consider ways of obtaining such funding. The Group wished to emphasize that the Council's discussions should be exploratory and should complement those of the General Assembly, which should remain the principal forum for discussion of the topic.

Mr. MARRAPODI (Observer for Italy), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the European Union welcomed the Australian proposal for the inclusion of an item entitled "New and innovative ideas for generating funds" in the provisional agenda of the 1996 substantive session. However, it was essential that the topic should be considered separately from the financing of the United Nations regular and peace-keeping budgets in the General Assembly;

moreover, the European Union did not envisage alternatives to Member States' contributions to those budgets. Bearing in mind the importance of raising funds for globally agreed priorities, including those defined by the recent United Nations conferences, the European Union welcomed a preliminary exchange of views on new ideas for additional financing and modalities for further consideration of the subject. The European Union was not requesting the preparation of a substantive report by the Secretariat; however, it felt that it would be helpful for the Secretariat to provide a list of the existing relevant reference documents.

Mr. HOPE (United States) said that his delegation welcomed Australia's proposal for the inclusion of the new agenda item but could not consider any funding mechanisms which were not voluntary.

Draft decision IX was adopted.

JOINT AND CO-SPONSORED UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS/ACQUIRED IMMUNODEFICIENCY SYNDROME (HIV/AIDS) (E/1996/11; E/1996/L.2)

The PRESIDENT drew attention to draft decision E/1996/L.2, saying he took it that the Council wished to adopt it.

It was so decided.

INCREASE IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE PROGRAMME OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (E/1996/5; E/1996/L.3)

The PRESIDENT drew attention to draft decision E/1996/L.3, saying he took it that the Council wished to adopt it.

It was so decided.

TRANSFORMATION OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOOD AID POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES INTO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (E/1995/131 and Add.1)

The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should take note of documents E/1995/131 and Add.1.

It was so decided.

REGIONAL COOPERATION IN THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND RELATED FIELDS (E/1996/L.4)

The PRESIDENT drew attention to draft decision E/1996/L.4, saying he took it that the Council wished to adopt it.

It was so decided.

Mr. MARRAPODI (Observer for Italy), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that while the European Union had accepted the general theme proposed for consideration under the item of regional cooperation, it was convinced that fruitful discussion would have necessitated focusing on the

contributions of the individual regional commissions to developments in the economic and social fields and to recent United Nations conferences.

ELECTIONS, NOMINATIONS AND CONFIRMATIONS (E/1996/3, E/1996/10)

The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should take up elections and nominations postponed from previous sessions, and confirmations.

It was so decided.

Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development (E/1996/10)

The PRESIDENT said that the Secretariat had been given the name of Mr. Mebane (Italy), nominated by his Government, to replace Mr. Pinchera, who had died before the expiration of his term. He took it that the Council wished to appoint Mr. Mebane by acclamation.

It was so decided.

Confirmations (E/1996/3)

The PRESIDENT said that document E/1996/3 contained the names of representatives of the functional commissions which had been submitted for confirmation by the Council since the close of the organizational session for 1995. He took it that the Council wished to confirm those nominations.

It was so decided.

OTHER MATTERS

The PRESIDENT suggested that the open-ended working group on non-governmental organizations should consider the question of computers and information systems.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.